

LUKMAAN IAS

Committee (1935), or Wheeler Committee, studied the problem of delays in the working of the secretariat and recommended the practice of double nothings to speed up the work. Further, the Maxwell Committee (1937) suggested that the secretary of the department should be responsible to the minister and that the secretary was the officer competent to guide the minister. Later, the Tottenham Committee (1945-46) reported on the organization of departments, the question of staffing and the reorganization of the entire secretariat system. It recommended that distinct duties be assigned to different grades of secretarial officers and agreed nomenclatures be set for each grade.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis makes it clear that, under the British rule, Indian administration had been through a state of rigorous experimentation and continuing innovation. Even some of the features of the Mughal administration were adopted and adapted by the British rulers in India. Such combinations of continuity and change have been striking features of India's administrative legacy.

It is obvious that the contemporary Indian administrative system has been built on its British heritage. The legal context of Indian administration, generalist character of civil service, All India services, civil services recruitment by open competitive examinations, administrative training, the central and the state secretariat systems, pattern of departmentalization, office procedures, management of districts, strengthening the position of district collector, revenue administration, police system, reorganization of the judiciary, criminal justice administration, the rule of law, institutionalization of impersonal government, budgeting, accounting, auditing and a number of other structural and functional areas of Indian administration, including urban local government, have their roots in the British rule. Even the origin of the Indian Constitution can be traced to the Government of India Act of 1935 which was termed by a few scholars as a 'mini constitution'. Though the British had their own objectives of sustaining and strengthening their empire, to which the administrative system was geared, some of the consequences of their organizational initiatives have proved to be useful to India even after independence.

A number of historians are critical of the self-centredness and exploitative intentions of the British in India during their rule. It is difficult to ignore the indictments of Dadabhai Naoroji in

Poverty and Unbritish Rule in India and Romesh Chandra Dutt's critical analysis in *The Economic History of India*. Such allegations would hold true for most imperialistic powers though these cannot be ignored. Yet, the need remains to evaluate dispassionately the contribution of the British rule to the redesigning of the Indian administrative system as distinct from the intentions and consequences of such designing.

There was a large part of India which was just partially or marginally affected by the British rule and its administrative initiatives. More than five hundred and fifty princely states of the country did not experience the same kind of administrative innovations which the British India did. Despite the progressive policies of some of the princely rulers, the chasm in the structure and working of the administrative systems of these "two Indias" was significant. There is a clear need to examine the sources of such divergence and diversity.

Hence, a few questions that should be addressed in the context of the legacy of the pre-independent India, may be as follows:

1. Have the British rule and the princely regimes, through their legacies and impact, strengthened the centralization tendencies in Indian administration, making it difficult for the decentralized governance structure to take deep roots?
2. Have these styles of rulership lent an aura of 'awe' to the senior administrators making them perennially the 'mai-baap' of the common man?
3. Have the laws and rules followed during the British rule strengthened the administrative culture of secrecy and aloofness which has been difficult to be transformed into a regime of openness and proximity between the rulers and the ruled?
4. Has the alien rule been responsible for the continuation of a feeling of distrust against the civilian rulers (including the police)?
5. Has the British administration in India, bequeathed a legacy of stability, continuity and merit-orientation in the post-independence governance system? Is it not creditable that without tampering with the basic structure of the government system designed by the British, India has modified the spirit of this system to a substantial extent? No doubt; the journey towards the goal of democratic transformation blending with effective governance is long, yet not wearisome.